

**Boston Redevelopment Authority**

**2000 U. S. Census Data for Boston and its Neighborhoods**

**Web Resource Pages**

- A. Frequently asked Questions (FAQ) About Census Data for Boston and Small Area Statistics**
- B. Subject Contents of Census Products**
- C. BRA Census 2000 Publications**
- D. Contact Information**
- E. Maps of Small Area Geographies within Boston**

## **A. Frequently asked Questions (FAQ) About Census Data for Boston and Small Area Statistics**

### **1. How can I look up data for a particular street address?**

You cannot get data for a specific address because census data are kept confidential at the individual household level for 72 years. In its collection and presentation of data, the U.S. Census Bureau makes data available at the block, block group, or census tract level in the geographic area surrounding a particular address. If you have an exact address you can look up the census tract, block group, and block that contains that address by using the Census Tract Locator function on the U.S. Census Bureau web site (<http://www.census.gov>). Once you have the corresponding geographies, you can use American Fact Finder to obtain data for that particular block, block group or census tract.

### **2. What is American Fact Finder and can it meet my data needs?**

The Census Bureau has created American Fact Finder (a menu-driven computer program at <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>) which can display 2000 data for blocks, block groups, or census tracts, beginning from an address. These data are “raw,” that is, neither aggregated into neighborhoods nor displayed in cross-tabs like the BRA tables at this web-site.

At this web-site we have aggregated the 2000 census data into widely used blocks of data, see #6, below.

### **3. Have census tracts changed between 1990 and 2000?**

Yes, there have been some changes in census tract geography for Boston between 1990 and 2000. The Census Bureau split several tracts because the tract population had become too large. In other instances, adjacent tracts were joined where tract population had become too small to create sound estimates. In either case, by combining or dividing 2000 tracts (by block groups) it is possible to get data consistent with 1990 boundaries. For a table and map showing all changes in Boston census tracts between 1990 and 2000 in Boston [Click here](#) (Link).

There were also changes in census block and block group geographies as well as the associated numbering systems between 1990 and 2000. Block level comparisons can be made provided you use the respective block numbers. Many 2000 **block groups** are different and are now much more homogeneous (no longer mixing public housing with owner occupied units) but decade comparisons are only possible at either the block or the tract level.

In prior decades, Census tract geography also changed. Between 1970 and 1980 and also between 1980 and 1990, some growing tracts were split. Prior to 1970, the Census Bureau used a different coding system with letters and numbers although most of the boundaries still correspond closely. To be sure in doing comparative research, always check a map or table with information on tract geographies.

### **4. Are there changes in the census data gathered between 1990 and 2000?**

First of all, the short form was made even shorter by moving most of the detail on housing units to the long form (see #5, below) . Secondly, some detailed questions were eliminated from the long form. Thirdly, the race detail and Hispanic origin questions had formatting changes and different answer possibilities, making exact comparisons problematic but generally possible if one proceeds carefully.

## **5. What are SF1 and SF3 and how do they differ?**

Summary File 1 (SF1) is based on responses that every household had to answer by using the short-form questionnaire (also called the 100-percent count). Summary File 3 (SF3) is based on the set of additional questions that approximately 15% of the households (around 1 in 7) had to answer by using the long-form questionnaire (also called the sample questionnaire). Most SF1 data are available down to the block level, except for special aspects such as age/race detail. SF3 data are expected to be available only down to the block-group level, due to small sample size. SF1 was released in June of 2001 while SF3 will be released in May-September of 2002. To view what data each file contains [Click here](#) (Link).

## **6. How do I begin to use this web-site?**

Here we have aggregated the 2000 census data for widely used geographic areas and created useful crosstabs.

First, determine what data you want and consider whether the geographic areas on this BRA web site suit your purposes. It is usually easier and better to use existing areas for which the data have already been extracted, sorted, and summarized in readily accessible tables, but you can begin with American Fact Finder, building up your own geographic areas.

All 2000 census data from SF1 for Boston are compiled on this web site, aggregated into the following geographic sets:

- BRA Planning Districts - 16 larger neighborhood areas plus the Harbor (in use by the BRA since the early 1970s). Most people use these as representative of the basic neighborhoods of Boston. However, some age/race details (that are available at the census tract level) are not available because Planning Districts are not comprised of whole tracts but straddle some census tracts.
- Neighborhood Statistical Areas (NSAs) - 69 small neighborhoods that are component parts of the BRA Planning Districts and much larger than census tracts (developed by the BRA beginning with the 1980 census). Again, some tract level age/race details are unavailable.
- Zip Code Districts- boundaries of 32 residential post office districts used for mail delivery (approximated, see zip codes versus ZCTAs) are commonly used to represent neighborhood areas when using addresses with zip codes. Health data are often compiled by zip code, using addresses of clients. Also, some business data regarding the number, type, and employment sector of business establishments and jobs are collected by zip code.
- City Council Districts - the 9 political boundaries are built up from ward/precincts into areas comprising about 65,000 persons each that are the districts from which district city councillors have been elected since 1983. Not widely used for purposes other than voting data.
- Neighborhood Zoning Districts (NZDs) - 42 districts in Boston defining boundaries of neighborhood zoning and land use areas (used by the BRA Planning and Zoning Department). These have been created for zoning purposes but are very unequal in population size. Only 25 of these districts have at least 3,000 people and some have very little or no population.
- Wards - the 22 basic political subdivisions in Boston. Not used for many purposes other than the Assessor's real estate property information, which is

collected in a ward-precinct-block format. (Voting districts in Boston are created from precincts, subdivisions of these wards).

- Census Tracts - the 157 smallest areas of the city for which all detailed data are available. They are quite a bit smaller than the NSAs, ranging in size from 500 to over 4,000 people.
- Census Tract Districts - these 16 larger aggregates of census tracts also comprise "neighborhoods" but some differ from the BRA Planning Districts, especially Roxbury. They are simply the 100's series of tracts (i.e. 500's = East Boston). Because they are comprised of whole census tracts, they contain most complete information available.

**7. Why are some data not available for all geographies?**

Some of the census data detail on age/race/ ethnicity and rare household types is only available at the level of whole census tracts (not down to block groups or even blocks). Thus, if you stick with census tracts, every last piece of short form data is available for use. However, if your boundaries straddle and cut across tracts, then some of the detail is not available. This explains why the Census Tract Districts have more detail than the Planning Districts and Neighborhood Statistical Areas.

**8. What is the difference between a Zip Code district and a ZCTA?**

There are no official maps of Zip Code districts because they are subject to change at any time without notice. To enable comparison with 1990 data, these district data match the 1990 districts. (A Zip Code district is the approximate boundaries of a post office's delivery routes, and different addresses in a given block may be served by different carriers.) ZCTAs (Zip Code Tabulation Areas) were newly created by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000 as whole block approximations of the Zip Code districts for purposes of establishing boundaries for the reporting of census data. ZCTAs are always comprised of whole census blocks, based on the dominant carrier. Most ZCTAs are pretty close to the zip code districts.

**9. Are neighborhood data available for years prior to 1990?**

Yes, tract level census data are available back to the year 1910 for Boston census tracts. Beginning in 1910 and with each subsequent decennial census year, limited data are available because in the early years fewer questions were asked. Also, tract geography as well as the tract coding system has changed over the years (see number 1 above). The Boston Public Library Government Documents Division has books with the Boston census tract data for all years. The BRA Policy Development and Research Department has very good compilations of census data for the BRA planning Districts for 1970 and 1980 in report #169 and for 1980 NSAs in report #143. At this time PDR is reworking the data for Planning Districts for 1950 and 1960 and intends to have those data available in the year 2003.

**10. Can data be copied from this file (in PDF format) into a Word file or a spreadsheet?**

You can copy each page individually from the PDF file to a Word document -- and the result is an exact "picture" of that page -- if you use the appropriate function from Adobe Acrobat Reader (available free on the internet). To copy text and data usefully into a spreadsheet, use the newest release of full Adobe Acrobat (5.0) which is available at a cost from Adobe, and cut and paste data into your destination file. Without this full version of Adobe Acrobat you will not be able to enter the data directly into a spreadsheet, manipulate the statistics, or search the document for text (strings of ASCII characters).

**11. What is PL-94-171 data?**

PL-94-171 stands for Public Law number 94-171 which was the first data set released by the U.S. Census Bureau in March of 2001. These data report the total population and the age 18 and over voting age population by racial groupings down to the block level of geography for every block in the nation. These data are to be used for redistricting the Congress. It was also possible to report the youth population aged 17 and under. The only other piece of information reported is the number of housing units by block.

**12. What reports on Boston Census data are available on this Web Site?**

See Web Resource Page C. [Click here.](#)

**13. What were the changes in racial categories were changed between the 1990 and 2000 Census?**

There were several major changes in the collection of data on race and Hispanic origin in the 2000 Census. First of all the Hispanic question was asked before the racial question so a greater count of Hispanics may have resulted and a better collection of racial categories may have resulted. Second, persons were allowed to answer more than one race so a combination of multiple race answers was possible. Third some of the responses to Hispanic ancestries and other racial categories was change. The result is data are available for 63 racial categories and each by Hispanic or non-Hispanic origin (126 in all). Because of these changes exact comparisons between 1990 and 2000 data are not possible but general comparisons are. See BRA Census research report number 551 for a full explanation or visit the U.S. Census web site at [census.gov](http://census.gov)

**14. For help outside the BRA who can I get in touch with?**

U.S. Census Bureau for national data ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)),

MISER (Mass. Institute for Social and Economic Research or the State Data Center) for State of Massachusetts data and cities and towns within Massachusetts ([www.umass.edu/miser/](http://www.umass.edu/miser/)),

MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) for data on 101 metropolitan Boston cities and towns ([www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org)).

**15. Remember**

The U.S. Census Bureau is the source of Census data and the ultimate resource for the data and all related information about it.

## B. Subject Contents of Census Products

1. **Public Law 94-171, Census 2000 Redistricting Summary File** (released March, 2001)  
Contents: Information required for local redistricting. Data include tabulations for total population, the population 18 years and older for 63 race categories, Hispanic or Latino, and race by not Hispanic or Latino.

2. **Summary File 1 (SF1)** (released June, 2001)  
Contents: Presents counts and basic cross-tabulations of information collected from all people and housing units (100% count). Information is available on:

Household relationship	Race
Sex	Housing tenure (owner or renter)
Age	Housing vacancy characteristics
Hispanic or Latino origin	

3. **Summary File 3 (SF3)** (released in Summer of 2002)  
Contents: First release of the information collected on a sample basis (sample characteristics), generally 1-in-6 of persons and housing units statistically adjusted to represent the whole population. Data are provided on:

Population	Housing
Marital status	Value of home or monthly rent paid
Place of birth, citizenship and year of entry	Units in structure
School enrollment and educational attainment	Year structure built
Ancestry	Number of rooms and number of bedrooms
Migration (residence in 1995)	Year moved into residence
Language spoken at home and ability to speak English	Plumbing and kitchen facilities
Veteran status	Telephone service
Disability	Vehicles available
Grandparents as caregivers	Heating fuel
Labor force status	Farm residence
Place of work and journey to work	Utilities, mortgage, taxes, insurance, and fuel costs
Occupation, industry, and class of worker	
Work status in 1999	
Income in 1999	

## **C. BRA Census 2000 Publications**

- 1. Changes in Population, Race, and Ethnicity**  
Publication # 541  
Changes in Population Race, and Ethnicity in Boston and its 16 Planning Districts
- 2. Boston's Youth Population – 2000**  
Publication #542  
The Youth and Adult Population by Race and Ethnicity for 16 Planning Districts
- 3. Changes in Youth Population – 1990 - 2000**  
Publication # 543  
Changes in the Youth Population of Boston for 16 Planning Districts
- 4. Boston's Population by Census Tract – 2000**  
Publication # 544  
Population data by Census Tracts in Boston for 2000
- 5. Boston's Population – 2000**  
Publication # 547  
City-wide Census 2000 Results from Summary File 1
- 6. Boston's Population – 2000**  
Publication #551  
Population Changes in Boston's Asian and Hispanic Ethnic Groups: 1990 – 2000
- 7. Boston's Population by Ward and Precinct-1990-2000**  
Publication #548  
Changes by Race and Ethnicity
- 8. Boston's Housing and Households – Census 2000**  
Publication #549  
An Overview of housing trends and household characteristics in the City and its neighborhoods
- 9. Boston Census 2000 Neighborhood Profiles**  
Publication #550  
A comparative view of demographic trends in Boston neighborhoods, 1990-2000

## **D. Contact Information**

Web site: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra>  
<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org>

Address: Policy Development and Research Department  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Ninth Floor, Room 963B  
Boston City Hall

PDR phone information: 617-918-4269  
PDR Email for information: [infoboston.bra@ci.boston.ma.us](mailto:infoboston.bra@ci.boston.ma.us)  
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm

Gregory W. Perkins  
Assistant Director, Policy Development and Research Department  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Ninth Floor  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201

Phone: 617-918-4411  
Fax: 617-918-4461  
e-mail: [greg.perkins.bra@ci.boston.ma.us](mailto:greg.perkins.bra@ci.boston.ma.us)

Rolf Goetze  
Senior Mapping (GIS) Analyst, Policy Development and Research Department  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Ninth Floor  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201

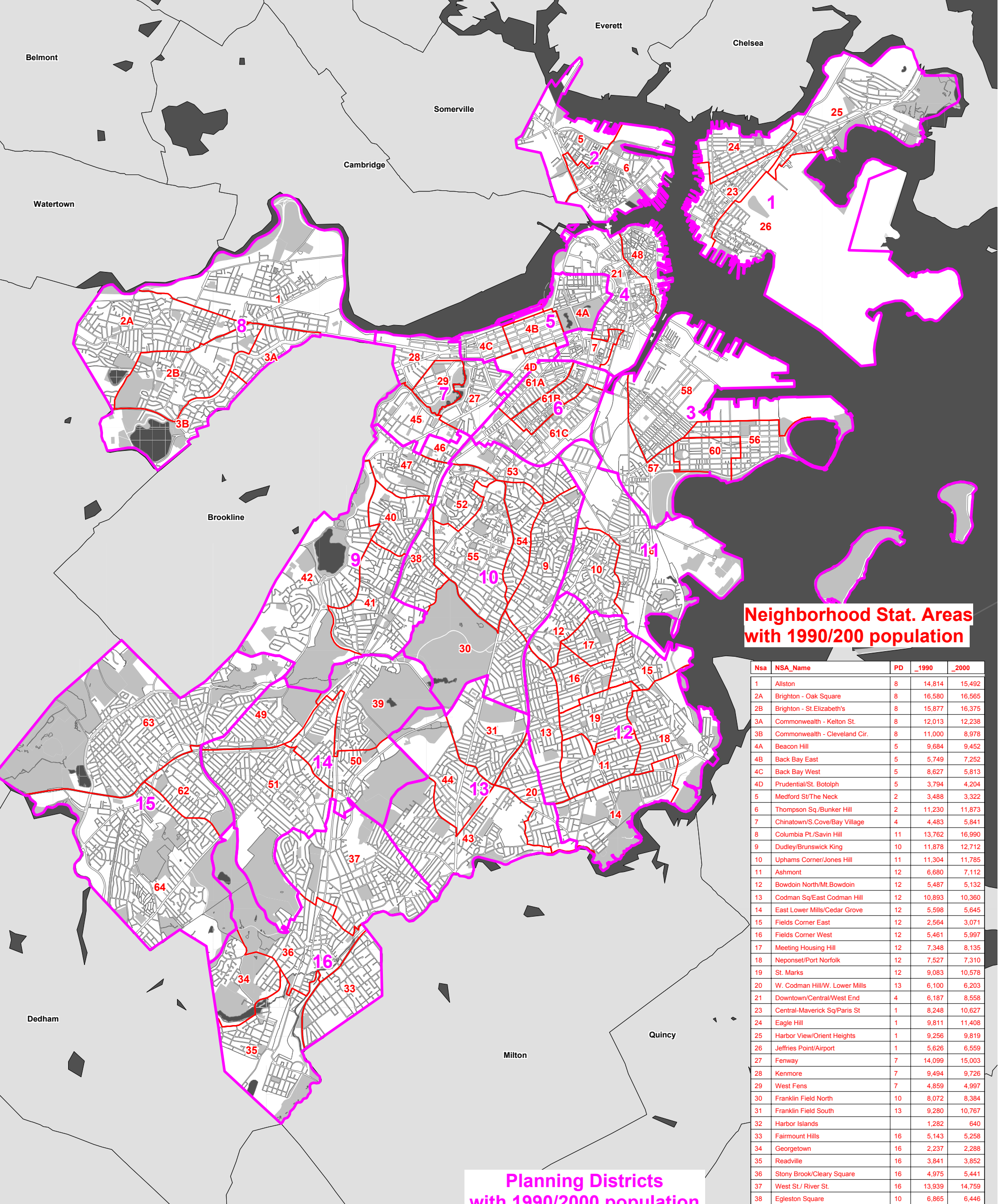
Phone: 617-918-4415  
Fax: 617-918-4461  
e-mail: [rolf.goetze.bra@ci.boston.ma.us](mailto:rolf.goetze.bra@ci.boston.ma.us)

Eswaran Selvarajah  
Senior Demographic Analyst, Policy Development and Research Department  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Ninth Floor  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201

Phone: 617-918-4396  
Fax: 617-918-4461  
e-mail: [eswaran.selvarajah.bra@ci.boston.ma.us](mailto:eswaran.selvarajah.bra@ci.boston.ma.us)



## **E. Maps of Small Area Geographies within Boston**



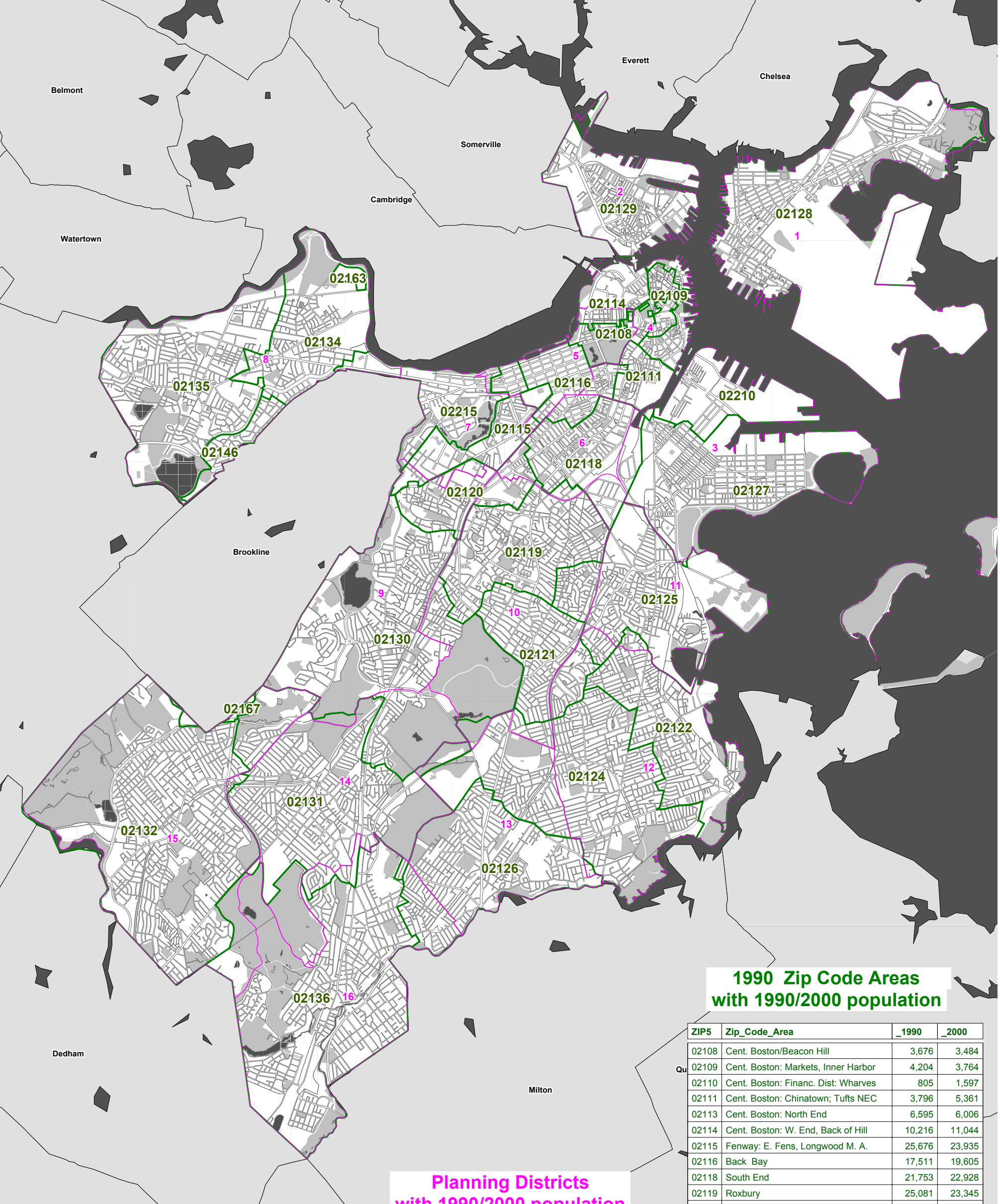
Planning Districts with 1990/2000 population

PC	NAME	_1990	_2000
1	EAST BOSTON	32,941	38,413
2	CHARLESTOWN	14,718	15,195
3	SOUTH BOSTON	29,467	29,965
4	CENTRAL	21,625	25,173
5	BACK BAY - BEACON HILL	27,845	26,721
6	SOUTH END	28,891	28,239
7	FENWAY - KENMORE	32,737	35,602
8	ALLSTON - BRIGHTON	70,284	69,648
9	JAMAICA PLAIN	41,193	38,196
10	ROXBURY	58,795	56,658
11	NORTH DORCHESTER	25,066	28,775
12	SOUTH DORCHESTER	60,641	63,340
13	MATTAPAN - FRANKLIN	35,988	37,607
14	ROSLINDALE	32,959	34,618
15	WEST ROXBURY	29,706	28,753
16	HYDE PARK	30,135	31,598
17	HARBOR ISLANDS	1,282	640
	CITY of BOSTON, TOTAL	574,273	589,141

# City of Boston:

17 Planning Districts (PDs)  
+ 69 Neighborhood Statis-  
tical Areas (NSAs)

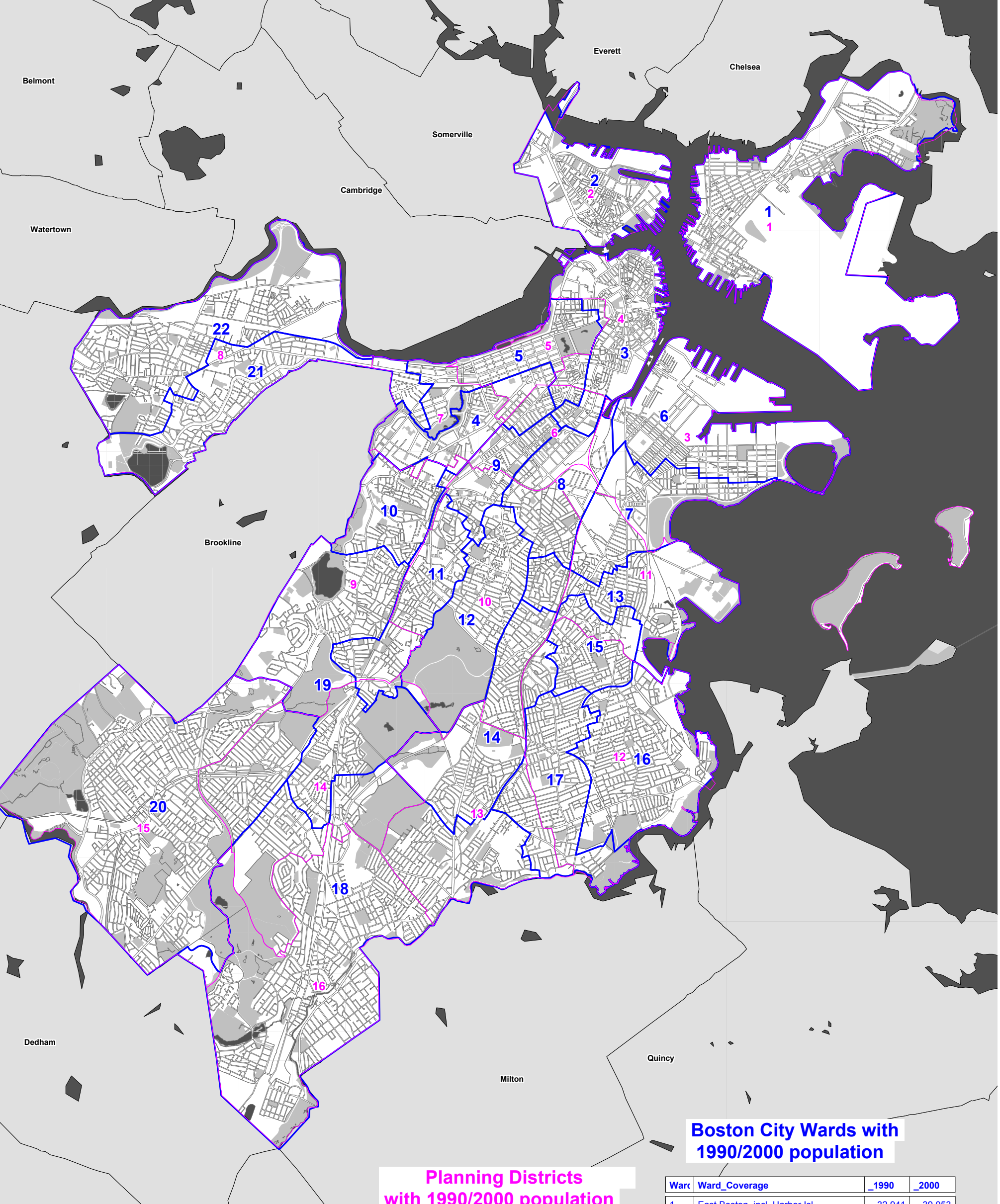




# City of Boston:

## Zip Code Areas vs. Planning Districts





**Boston City Wards with 1990/2000 population**

**Planning Districts with 1990/2000 population**

# City of Boston:

## City Wards vs. Planning Districts

PD	NAME	_1990	_2000
1	EAST BOSTON	32,941	38,413
2	CHARLESTOWN	14,718	15,195
3	SOUTH BOSTON	29,467	29,965
4	CENTRAL	21,625	25,173
5	BACK BAY - BEACON HILL	27,845	26,721
6	SOUTH END	28,891	28,239
7	FENWAY - KENMORE	32,737	35,602
8	ALLSTON - BRIGHTON	70,284	69,648
9	JAMAICA PLAIN	41,193	38,196
10	ROXBURY	58,795	56,658
11	NORTH DORCHESTER	25,066	28,775
12	SOUTH DORCHESTER	60,641	63,340
13	MATTAPAN - FRANKLIN	35,988	37,607
14	ROSLINDALE	32,959	34,618
15	WEST ROXBURY	29,706	28,753
16	HYDE PARK	30,135	31,598
17	HARBOR ISLANDS	1,282	640
	CITY of BOSTON, TOTAL	574,273	589,141

Warc	Ward_Coverage	_1990	_2000
1	East Boston, incl. Harbor Isl.	32,941	39,053
2	Charlestown	14,718	15,195
3	Downtown, N.+ W. End, Chinatown	26,066	28,167
4	Prudential - E. Fens-Medical Area	28,222	31,682
5	Back Bay, Beacon Hill, W. Fens	34,995	35,499
6	S. Boston, Broadway - Marine Pk	16,300	15,662
7	S. Boston. Andrew Sq. E. Everett Sq.	21,066	20,365
8	South End, South Bay, Dudley Sq.	12,356	11,645
9	South End, Lower Roxbury	13,994	14,774
10	Mission Hill, Hyde Square	22,397	20,450
11	Roxbury - JP, Egleston - Forest Hills	18,599	18,685
12	Roxbury Highlands, Franklin Park	18,145	16,922
13	Dorch: Jones, Savin Hill - Columbia Pt.	16,442	20,665
14	Roxb'y/Dorch: Franklin Fld, Grove Hall	31,614	32,488
15	Dorch: Meetinghse Hill, Adams St.	17,743	19,419
16	Dorch: Ashmont, Neponset, Pt. Norfolk	25,514	25,581
17	Dorch: Codman Sq. Lower Mills	24,663	26,497
18	Hyde Park, Readville, Mattapan	56,593	59,325
19	Jamaica Plain, Pondside, Arboretum	25,101	23,432
20	West Roxbury - Roslindale	39,112	38,108
21	Brighton - Commonwealth	45,938	45,868
22	Allston - Brighton - Oak Sq.	31,764	29,659
	CITY of BOSTON, Total	574,283	589,141